

## County Profile: Essex

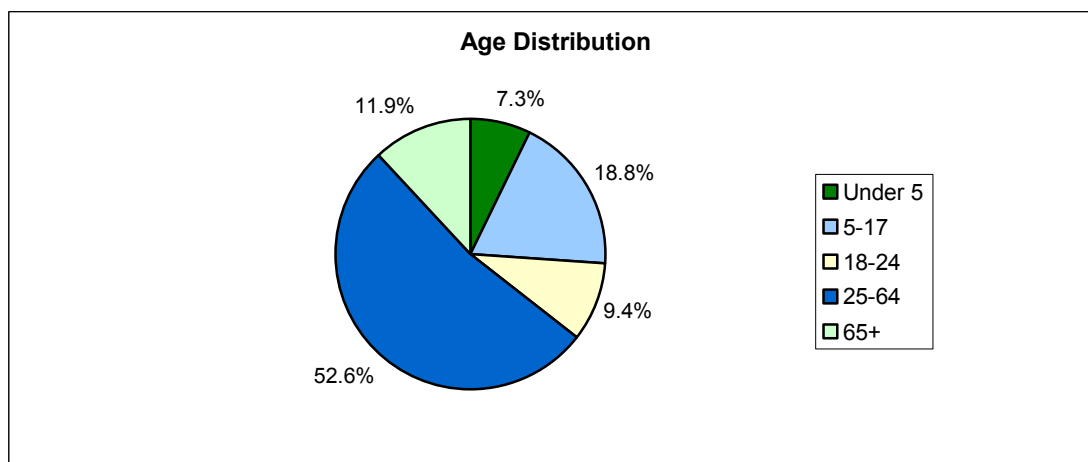


### General Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 793,633 individuals reside in Essex County's 22 municipalities. These individuals are spread out over a land area of 126.27 square miles, which translates into a population density of 6,285.4 persons per square mile. This makes Essex County the second most populous of the state's 21 counties, and the second most densely populated county in the state.

At 2%, Essex County had substantially less growth from 1990 to 2000 than the statewide average of 8.9%. The county's largest municipality, Newark experienced a reduction of less than 1% in its population over the past decade (total 2000 population – 273,546). Some of the larger municipalities also experienced declines, including Irvington and East Orange. There were also larger municipalities experiencing growth, including the West Orange township which grew almost 15% from 1990 to 2000 (total 2000 population – 44,943) and the City of Orange which grew almost 10% from 1990 to 2000 (total 2000 population – 32,868). However, population growth and reductions tended to be modest overall.

Essex County has 206,950 children under the age of 18. They comprise 26.1% of the county's total population and 9.9% of the state's child population. A total of 62% of Essex County residents are of working age (18 through 64), and 11.9% are 65 years and older. The median age is 34.7 years of age, the youngest median age of the state's 21 counties. In comparison to other counties, Essex County has a younger population.



## **Child Welfare**

Essex County's portion of statewide child abuse and neglect referrals is greater than the proportion of children residing in the county. While 9.9% of all children in New Jersey reside in Essex County, 12.8%, or 4,971 of the child abuse and neglect referrals are generated there. The patterns of abuse and neglect differ somewhat from the state pattern, with higher proportions of cases of sexual abuse and neglect and smaller proportions of cases involving physical, emotional or multiple abuse.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals in 2001**

	Essex County		New Jersey	
	N	%	N	%
Physical abuse	1,408	28.3	12,382	32.0
Emotional abuse	30	0.6	330	0.9
Sexual	304	6.1	2,179	5.6
Neglect	3,040	61.2	22,099	57.1
Multiple types	189	3.8	1,716	4.4
<i>Total</i>	4,971	---	38,706	---
Substantiated rate per 1,000 children	6.9	---	4.0	---
Percent substantiated	28.9	---	21.8	---

In the five Essex County District Offices and the Administrative Office, the active DYFS caseload is 9,217 children and 4,882 families. There are 1,470 in-state foster homes in Essex County. There are 2,027 Essex County children in foster care, which is 26% of the 7,807 children in foster care in New Jersey and more than twice the percentage of the state's children residing in this county. Of the Essex County children in foster care, 30.8% reside in a different county than their family, which is substantially less than the out-of-county statewide average of 44.6%.

From 1998 to 2002, 26 children in Essex County died as a result of abuse and neglect out of a statewide total of 123. Ten families of these children had an open/active case with DYFS at the time of their death. Ten cases had been unknown to DYFS, while six cases had been closed. The number of all infants who died in Essex County in 2000 was 109, 15.1% of the 723 infant deaths occurring in the state. The infant mortality rate of 9 deaths under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births was the third highest in the state and substantially higher than the statewide rate of 6.3.

## **Child Welfare Outcome Measures**

Information on various child welfare outcomes for Essex County is presented in the following table.<sup>1</sup> Essex County does better compared to the national standard in two areas, recurrence of maltreatment and percent re-entering foster care within 12 months. The percentage of child abuse and neglect cases in which there is a recurrence of abuse and/or neglect within six months is 4.7%, lower than the national standard of

<sup>1</sup> See definitions that follow for detailed descriptions of the categories presented in this table.

6.1%. Compared to a national standard of 8.6%, 5% of Essex children re-enter care within twelve months of leaving a foster care episode. 86.7%, 88.1% of Essex children who have been in placement no more than twelve months, have no more than two placements within that time period.

In other areas, Essex County does not meet the national standards for child welfare outcomes. Particularly striking is the percentage of children reunified with parents or caregivers within twelve months of discharge from foster care, 47.4% compared to a national standard of 76.2% or more. In addition, compared to the national standard, a smaller percentage of Essex children exited foster care for adoption within 24 months, 15.5% compared to a national standard of 32% or more.

### 2001 Child Welfare Outcome Measures by County

	Essex County	State	National Standard
Recurrence of maltreatment	4.7%	6.4%	6.1% or less
A/N incidence in foster care	.78%	.78%	.57% or less
Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry	47.4%	59.5%	76.2% or more
Re-enter care within 12 months	5.0%	8.2%	8.6% or less
Reduce time in foster care to adoption	15.5%	16.3%	32.0% or more
Increase placement stability	82.4%	86.2%	86.7% or more

Note. Data supplied by DYFS

### Definitions

**Reduce recurrence of maltreatment** – of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the reporting period, the percentage who had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period.

**A/N incidence in foster care** – of children who were in foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that was the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

**Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry** – of children reunified with parents or caretakers at time of discharge from foster care, the percentage reunified within 12 months.

**Re-enter care within 12 months** – of children who entered foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that re-entered care within 12 months of leaving foster care episode.

**Reduce time in foster care to adoption** – of all children who exited foster care to adoption, the percentage who exited within 24 months.

**Increase placement stability** – of all children who had been in foster care less than 12 months, the percentage who had no more than two placement settings during that time period.

## **Data Sources**

DYFS Approved Foster Homes File, 8/4/03  
DYFS Caseload Activity Report (DAR-SISM-5), 8/1/03  
DYFS, Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2000  
DYFS Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2001  
DYFS Foster Care File Extract, 6/6/03  
DYFS Statewide Summary of Foster Homes (DAR-PCISM-1), 7/4/03  
NJ Substantiated Abuse and Neglect Child Fatality Analysis for 1998-2002, July 2003  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data Summary File, Population for the Counties and Municipalities in New Jersey: 1990 and 2000 (PL1)  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Age and Sex (GCT-P5)  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density (GCT-PH1-R)  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Quick Table, QT-P2.  
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Demographic Profiles, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (DP-1)

2/17/04